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Nov. 21

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11/20/2012	Gas Official Says EPA Study Could Drive New Fracking Rules Under SDWA	Inside EPA Weekly Report
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11/20/2012	Editorial: Corn - Congress can fix our senseless ethanol policy	Fayetteville Observer - Online
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11/20/2012	Ontario not ready to allow fracking	CBC News Online
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Status quo may be left in place for handling coal ash
Crain's Cleveland Business - Online

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Tuesday, November 20, 2012

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ENERGY BLOG -- SCOTT SUTTELL

Status quo may be left in place for handling coal ash

Blog entry: November 20, 2012, 9:00 am | Author: SCOTT SUTTELL

The coal sector hasn't been on great terms with the Obama administration, but Forbes.com reports that the White House "may acquiesce to the industry's concern over how coal ash would be regulated."

"While its environmental backers won't be happy, the president and the Environmental Protection Agency will probably opt to continue regulating that coal combustion byproduct as a solid waste, as opposed to a hazardous waste," according to the website.

The difference, Forbes.com reports, "is that solid wastes are allowed to be recycled and used in such things as cement and dry wall. A hazardous waste ruling would stigmatize that coal ash and would essentially dry up those secondary markets, which would also increase the amount of refuse that must be dispensed."

Forbes.com notes that Akron-based FirstEnergy Corp. last August closed a coal ash disposal site in Pennsylvania as its neighbors there had long complained that its presence created unhealthy conditions. It had been the nation's largest such site, covering 1,700 acres.

EPA "is feeling pressure from both industry and environmentalists," according to the website. "But the most politically feasible path is for the agency to finalize a rule that permits coal ash to keep its solid waste status while also requiring new disposal methods - a move that would be litigated by opponents, delaying its implementation."

For instance, the website says, coal ash now is discarded as a liquid that goes into large surface impoundments or as a solid that is placed into landfills. "EPA would like to see all such byproducts converted from 'wet ash' to 'dry ash' and buried in secured liners," Forbes.com reports.

Here to stay

The public seems to be coming around on fracking.

USA Today reports that political obstacles to oil and gas production "are starting to fall away at the state and local levels as voters, elected officials and courts jump on the energy boom bandwagon."

Voters, the newspaper reports, "are rewarding local politicians who support production. Ballot measures are distributing potential tax windfalls broadly. And most state legislatures are focused on managing the economic and environmental consequences of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, so the drilling boom can speed up rather than slow down."

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Ted Boettner, executive director of the liberal West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, tells the newspaper, "Fracking is happening and it's not going to stop, so we have to take the high road of good regulation and taxes so communities are better off, not worse off, after it's done."

Kate Sinding, a lawyer for the Natural Resources Defense Council, says loopholes in federal law make it hard to stop fracking.

"A lot of traditional litigation tools are not available," she tells USA Today.

The ties that binds

Bloomberg reports that the State University of New York at Buffalo is shuttering a research institute opened earlier this year to study natural gas fracking "after potential conflicts of interest raised what the college's president called a 'cloud of uncertainty' over its work."

The Shale Resources and Society Institute is closed effective immediately, SUNY Buffalo president Satish Tripathi announced. A Buffalo nonprofit, the Public Accountability Initiative, said the institute's only report, issued last April, contained errors and didn't acknowledge "extensive ties" by its authors to the gas industry.

Bloomberg says the move "follows a decision last month by a gas industry group to cancel a Pennsylvania State University study of fracking after some faculty members balked at the project that had drawn criticism for being slanted toward industry."

Drilling companies, amid criticism that producing gas by fracking damages the environment, "are funding university research that at times reaches conclusions that counter the concerns of critics," Bloomberg notes.

Losing interest?

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices | Star-Gazette | stargazette.com
Star-Gazette - Online

11/21/2012

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It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind, said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see incredible job gains that could lead to a re-industrialization of America. Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks, Ebinger said.

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Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

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We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems, said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. How much a part is a big fight right now, Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film Promised Land is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some financing for the project came from a company in the United Arab Emirates — a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy.

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

Yes, we are concerned, said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development. He added that federal intrusion is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

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He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track, Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development, said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be some attempts to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive

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up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement, said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. That might make them a bit more open to regulatory oversight.

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a big opportunity for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. I don't think the president can punt this one, he said.

Whatever Obama does, it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy in the environmental community, Shellenberger said.

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Erie Times-News - Online

11/21/2012

Updated: November 17, 2012 9:57 PM EST

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

By KEVIN BEGOS

Associated Press

Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

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Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

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Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

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Ohio renews injection-well permitting
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COLUMBUS, Ohio Ohio began issuing its first new permits Tuesday for deep injection of chemically-laced wastewater from oil and gas drilling since a New Year's Eve quake in Youngstown prompted an unofficial statewide moratorium.

Rick Simmers, head of the state's Division of Oil and Gas Resources, said the first four new permits went out Tuesday to sites in Athens, Portage and Washington counties. He said another 28 sites will be permitted in small batches of five or under in coming months.

We never had an official moratorium on issuing the permits, but we've asked the companies to work cooperatively with us as we upgrade our statutes and rules to make them even more stringent, and the companies have, Simmer said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said state natural resources officials now believe new regulations include ample safeguards including the ability to order or conduct seismic testing before, during and after drilling to protect against future quakes.

Millions of gallons of wastewater from the drilling technique hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, are injected deep into the earth at such wells. The practice has been ridiculed and protested by environmental groups, and defended by well operators as safe and responsible.

Gov. John Kasich imposed a moratorium within a seven-mile radius of a Youngstown deep-injection site after a series of a dozen quakes that included a 4.0 magnitude tremor later linked to activity there. Simmers said Tuesday would mark an end to formal restrictions in the area, but that the offending well and those in the vicinity have no foreseeable plans to operate.

D&L Energy in Youngstown, the well's operator in northeast Ohio, sought state permission in February to re-open the shuttered well to conduct independent research to prove the well didn't cause the quakes. But Simmers said the company hasn't yet presented adequate information needed to be re-opened.

Kasich also issued an executive order this summer giving Simmers authority to order preliminary tests at proposed well sites, to prevent drilling where tests fail, and to restrict injection pressure. The state also can order installation of automatic shut-off valves and monitor for leakage.

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Simmers said the EPA turned well oversight over to Ohio years ago because the state's regulations surpass those of the federal government.

The first round of new wells permitted Tuesday included one in Athens County's Troy Township, one in Portage County's Deerfield Township and two in Washington County's Newport Township. One of the Washington County wells was previously operated as an oil and gas production well.

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**Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Imperial Valley Press - Online**

11/21/2012

Associated Press Petoskey News-Review

9:51 a.m. PST, November 19, 2012

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Gas Drilling Presents Obama with Historic Choices Construction Equipment Guide-Midwest Edition - Online

11/21/2012

Gas Drilling Presents Obama with Historic Choices

By: KEVIN BEGOS - Associated Press

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Ebinger agreed, saying that "if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks" that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. "I don't think the president can punt this one," he said.

Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger said.

Region: National Edition | StoryID: 19302 | Published On: 11/21/2012

Construction Equipment Guide

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

**PENNSYLVANIA: Enviros vexed by what's missing in water contamination reports
(EnergyWire, 11/20/2012)
Land Letter**

11/21/2012

Pennsylvania's environmental protection chief is defending his agency's controversial system for testing water wells near Marcellus Shale operations by saying other states work the same way. But regulators in those states say that's not true.

The flap began in the Keystone State, where it recently came to light that the state Department of Environmental Protection routinely withholds water quality data it deems irrelevant to oil and gas contamination. Critics are pressuring regulators to overhaul that practice because they say the untold contaminants could make people sick.

In the two weeks since a state legislator publicized the issue by calling for an investigation, DEP officials have repeatedly defended their process as standard operating procedure that has simply been "misapprehended" by drilling critics.

The contention boils down to this: When the state checks water wells that homeowners suspect might be tainted by drilling operations in the Marcellus Shale, samples are sent to an agency lab that uses a U.S. EPA testing method to screen for dozens of metals. DEP has determined that eight of those are strong indicators of oil and gas contamination, so it instructs the lab to return results on only those eight metals. Those are the results given to homeowners.

Protocol or not, environmentalists don't like it. The unreported metals include, for example, titanium, aluminum, silicon, lithium and molybdenum. DEP has said there's no way those metals, without the presence of the eight target metals, would indicate oil and gas contamination. But Nadia Steinzor, a coordinator for Earthworks' Oil and Gas Accountability Project, said it's not the role of a regulatory agency to decide which metals are of public concern.

"That is a tremendous lack of transparency on the part of a public agency," she said. "It's not really their call to say you're not going to be affected by X metal."

Earthworks signed a letter with other environmental groups last week urging Gov. Tom Corbett (R) to make changes to DEP's system and immediately release comprehensive results of previous tests.

The metals that are reported by the labs are barium, calcium, iron, potassium, magnesium, manganese, sodium and strontium, which are common contamination markers used by agencies in other states and recommended by the Marcellus Shale Coalition for water quality testing around oil and gas operations.

Do other states filter?

DEP Secretary Michael Krancer said in a letter defending his agency's practices that the parameters used in Pennsylvania are "substantially similar" to those used in New York, Ohio, Colorado and Wyoming.

But regulators in at least three of those states said they do not withhold any data from homeowners.

In an email, staff from Colorado's Department of Natural Resources said technicians in third-party labs there use the same testing technique -- EPA Method 200.7 -- that Pennsylvania uses to test for metals like calcium, arsenic, boron and more.

But unlike Pennsylvania, the labs and the agency do not filter the data. The environmental staff provides a summary table to concerned residents, along with a copy of the entire lab package. The data are also publicly available online and

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include metals like aluminum and lithium, which go unreported in Pennsylvania.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources officials said they, too, use Method 200.7 and report all parameters tested by the lab. They screen using an oil and gas analysis suite that includes the eight markers used in Pennsylvania, plus a few other contaminants, including aluminum and bromide -- unreported in Pennsylvania. Residents who file water complaints receive water investigation reports along with copies of the unfiltered lab results.

Officials from New York's Department of Environmental Conservation, which also uses that EPA testing method, said any testing would have to be released "in its entirety to the landowner."

A review of the state's draft environmental impact statement for fracking, which is currently on hold there, shows the state plans to test for contamination with lab parameters that focus on a smaller group of metals, including barium, chloride, iron, manganese and sodium, along with other materials.

Pennsylvania DEP spokesman Kevin Sunday wrote in an email that Krancer's assertion that Pennsylvania's practices are similar to others is based on a "good working relationship" among states.

He clarified that the secretary's statements are not in defense of "filtered" data because the agency maintains it has not filtered anything; rather, it has zeroed in on target metals for further analysis. The results for the whole suite of metals are preliminary, he said, and final results are pursued for those contamination markers only.

Are all results final?

Indeed, hydrogeology researcher David Yoxtheimer says the results of metals testing that go unreported in Pennsylvania are not as readily available as environmentalists think.

Although the lab uses the EPA method that screens for 24 or more metals, technicians have to take an extra step to get final results on the eight markers. The initial analysis produces a chart of peaks and valleys that indicate levels of the various metals. That must be analyzed to identify the levels of target metals, which are then compared with a reference standard to ensure the results are accurate.

In other words, the eight target metals are subject to further analysis -- and cost -- to ensure quality. So the lab may have preliminary results for all the metals but final results for only the eight. Krancer said during a conference last week that he has no intention of releasing data points that have not undergone the quality-control analysis, especially because he said they do not signal oil and gas contamination.

"You're going to use this method and in theory you could report all 24," said Yoxtheimer, who is on staff at Pennsylvania State University's Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research. "But we're really not interested in two-thirds of them because they're not related to drilling impacts, at least commonly."

That shadow of condition, "at least commonly," is enough to keep many environmentalists on edge.

"[T]he reporting procedure reflects an anachronistic approach to water testing that is gravely insufficient in light of the new and specific impacts of high-volume drilling and hydraulic fracturing in deep shale formation," the groups wrote in their letter to the governor last week.

Because industry technology and practices evolve to enhance production, they wrote, additional metals could enter water supplies, and DEP's focus on the eight markers could result in other problematic materials being overlooked. Plus, they say, there is scant research on the effect of exposure to even low doses of multiple contaminants at the same time -- making full disclosure critical for understanding those unknowns.

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"In a time in which drilling practices are changing so rapidly, it is something to look at and revisit," Steinzor said. "If nothing else, if we can succeed in getting states that do this to take another look ... that'll be a step in the right direction."

Spats vs. substance

For now, the battle is relegated to an exchange of heated remarks in letters, blog posts and statements made to local newspapers. Rep. Jesse White, the state legislator who sparked the dust-up by calling for an investigation into DEP lab procedures, has been seared by industry representatives who say he's just bitter about a falling-out he had with driller Range Resources Corp.

Range released a series of 2010 emails between White and company officials that illustrate a once-friendly relationship that turned sour when Range hosted a fundraiser for the legislator that came up short on cash. White has dismissed the emails as an attempt by the industry to discredit him as he pushes for increased accountability among Marcellus operators.

Environmentalists who have taken up the cause have sidestepped the spat and instead focused on the lab procedures in question. But Krancer and other state officials have brushed off the groups' requests as a misinformed product of wild accusations from White.

"The letter was just echoing unsubstantiated and outrageous allegations," said Corbett administration spokesman Eric Shirk, adding that although DEP is always reviewing and improving policies, it has no plans to change the lab protocol.

Former DEP Secretary John Hanger offered his take two weeks ago, telling EnergyWire that he believed the agency's policies were not an attempt to shroud any data, but that they should be changed immediately in order to give residents all available information (EnergyWire , Nov. 5). Even if the other metals are unrelated to drilling, he said, residents should know what's there.

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**Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Marion Star - Online**

11/20/2012

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

12:05 PM,

Nov 17, 2012

|

PITTSBURGH - Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options and risks for the Obama administration.

It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind, said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see incredible job gains that could lead to a re-industrialization of America. Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks, Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide Beyond Natural Gas campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok.

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Ohio renews injection-well permits Marion Star - Online

11/20/2012

Ohio renews injection-well permits

Governor's moratorium on fracking comes to an end

12:14 AM,

Nov 14, 2012

|

COLUMBUS - Ohio began issuing its first new permits Tuesday for deep injection of chemically-laced wastewater from oil and gas drilling since a New Year's Eve quake in Youngstown prompted an unofficial statewide moratorium.

Rick Simmers, head of the state's Division of Oil and Gas Resources, said the first four new permits went out Tuesday to sites in Athens, Portage and Washington counties. He said another 28 sites will be permitted in small batches of five or under in coming months.

We never had an official moratorium on issuing the permits, but we've asked the companies to work cooperatively with us as we upgrade our statutes and rules to make them even more stringent, and the companies have, Simmer said

He said state natural resources officials now believe new regulations include ample safeguards including the ability to order or conduct seismic testing before, during and after drilling to protect against future quakes.

Millions of gallons of wastewater from the drilling technique hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, are injected deep into the earth at such wells. The practice has been ridiculed and protested by environmental groups, and defended by well operators as safe and responsible.

Gov. John Kasich imposed a moratorium within a seven-mile radius of a Youngstown deep-injection site after a series of a dozen quakes that included a 4.0 magnitude tremor later linked to activity there. Simmers said Tuesday would mark an end to formal restrictions in the area, but that the offending well and those in the vicinity have no foreseeable plans to operate.

D&L Energy in Youngstown, the well's operator in northeast Ohio, sought state permission in February to re-open the shuttered well to conduct independent research to prove the well didn't cause the quakes. But Simmers said the company hasn't yet presented adequate information needed to be re-opened.

Kasich also issued an executive order this summer giving Simmers authority to order preliminary tests at proposed well sites, to prevent drilling where tests fail, and to restrict injection pressure. The state also can order installation of automatic shut-off valves and monitor for leakage.

Simmers said the EPA turned well oversight over to Ohio years ago because the state's regulations surpass those of the federal government.

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The first round of new wells permitted Tuesday included one in Athens County's Troy Township, one in Portage County's Deerfield Township and two in Washington County's Newport Township.

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Ontario won't allow fracking for gas without evidence it's safe: McGuinty Global Toronto - Online

11/20/2012

Photo Credit: MLADEN ANTONOV , Getty Images

TORONTO - Ontario would need to see scientific proof that hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is safe before it allows energy companies to use the controversial practice to extract natural gas, Premier Dalton McGuinty said Tuesday.

No private companies have approached the province to request permission to frack, which involves the use of chemically-treated water under extreme pressure in drill holes to fracture underground shale and release gas or oil.

"If somebody was to approach us and say would you consider fracking in Ontario, I think the first thing we'd have to say is: 'Hang on a second now. We're going to have to take a look at the latest evidence associated with fracking, the risks. There have been some experts who've written about the risks associated with water,'" said McGuinty.

"I think we'd have to take a long hard look at the scientific evidence before we'd give a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down, but at this point in time, it's purely academic."

The New Democrats shared McGuinty's concerns about negative environmental impacts from fracking, especially on drinking water.

"We've been watching what's been happening across the country and across North America on the fracking issue, and one of the things we're obviously concerned about is making sure that water tables are safe, making sure that the process doesn't threaten other important environmental considerations," said NDP Leader Andrea Horwath.

However, the Progressive Conservatives said they were "very optimistic" about the jobs that could be created if fracking were approved in Ontario.

"There's 100 years of affordable energy that can come from it," said PC energy critic Vic Fedeli.

"We're very encouraged by it and everything we've seen to this point, from all the engineers and experts, talks about the safety and the environmental safety of it."

Opponents of fracking said companies including Mooncor Oil and Gas and Dundee Energy are buying up land in southwestern Ontario, especially the Kettle Point area on Lake Huron, that could be used for fracking.

"Mooncor has not announced any plans to frack in Ontario," company spokesman Nick Tsimidis said in an email Tuesday. Dundee Energy did not immediately reply to requests for an interview.

The Council of Canadians opposes fracking, and wants Ontario to follow Quebec's lead and impose a moratorium on the practice. It warns fracking in Ontario could have serious long-term and cumulative impacts on the Great Lakes.

Quebec has a moratorium on fracking and all oil and gas exploration activities under the Saint Lawrence River, but other provinces, including British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, allow fracking.

At least 175,000 wells have been fracked in Canada, the majority of them in Alberta.

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Nova Scotia had some fracking operations in 2007-08, but the NDP government has said it won't approve any more hydraulic fracturing until a review of the process is completed in 2014.

A report done for the New Brunswick government, released in October, said the province should proceed with shale gas exploration but with a phased-in approach that would limit it to one to three sites to allow for research and development.

The B.C. Oil and Gas Commission said in September that a spate of small earthquakes in the province's northeastern corner were caused by fracking in the Horn River Basin, a gas-rich shale formation that's attracted some of the industry's biggest players. The 38 quakes ranged between magnitudes of 2.2 and 3.8 on the Richter scale.

Last December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for the first time, implicated fracking in causing ground water pollution. The EPA announced it found compounds likely associated with fracking chemicals in the groundwater beneath a Wyoming community where residents say their well water reeked of chemicals.

The issue has caught the attention of some celebrities, with Yoko Ono, Paul McCartney, Lady Gaga and actor Alec Baldwin joining Artists Against Fracking in New York state.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

Drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Mansfield News-Journal - Online

11/20/2012

Drilling presents Obama with historic choices

All eyes on him as issue looms

12:50 AM,

Nov 19, 2012

|

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**Robert Redford Conservancy For Southern California Sustainability Established At Pitzer College
Huffington Post, The**

11/20/2012

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A California college is teaming up with Robert Redford to create a program where students can combine environmental studies with media and liberal arts.

The Los Angeles Times reports Tuesday (<http://lat.ms/Uctatp>) that Pitzer College, one of the seven Claremont Colleges, is creating the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability with a \$10 million gift from Nicholas and Susan Pritzker, parents of a Pitzer graduate who support environmental causes.

Redford is a trustee of the college and serves as its special adviser on the environment.

The program's aim is to create environmental communicators and advocates. Its centerpiece will be a 12-acre coastal sage scrub ecosystem, an endangered habitat where students can study problems and come up with solutions.

Information from: Los Angeles Times, <http://www.latimes.com>

Gisele Bundchen

Although she may be one of the [most beautiful women in the world](http://www.askmen.com/celebs/women/models/15_gisele_bundchen.html), Gisele Bundchen is much more than just a pretty face. Named the [2011 Greenest International Celebrity of the Year](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/27/gisele-best-green-celebrity_n_1115242.html#s429728), Bundchen devotes an extraordinary amount of her time and money to environmental causes. She has been a Goodwill Ambassador for the [United Nations Environment Program](http://www.unep.org/) since 2009, works with the [Brazilian movement A Drop Of Water \(Gota D'água\)](http://vimeo.com/32243308), and is involved in her [hometown's Clean Water Project](http://hqweb.unep.org/gwa/ambassadors/gisele/). And with the Amazon rainforest as one of her main passions, Bundchen co-hosted the Rainforest Alliance annual gala in 2009. For more information on how [Mrs. Bundchen-Brady](http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20261937,00.html) stays eco-friendly, [check out her green blog](http://blog.giselebundchen.com.br/en/)!

Video: Stunning Gisele Bundchen Helps the Environment

Gisele Bundchen stays fashionable to represent at a UN environmental summit in New York.

Robert Redford

Actor [Robert Redford](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000602/) is a long time environmental advocate and a trustee of the Natural Resources Defense Council and founder of [the Sundance Institute](http://www.sundance.org/about/).
A [long time blogger for HuffPost](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-redford/), Redford has written many pieces dissecting the impact of fracking on our planet, and the cozy relationship Big Oil has with the government.
In a June blog piece, [Redford](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-redford/fossil-fuel-subsidies_b_1605146.html) wrote about energy subsidies and the Rio+20 conference. "We should not be subsidizing the destruction of our planet," Redford affirmed. "Fossil fuels are literally cooking our planet,

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Nov. 21

polluting our air and draining our wallets. Why should we continue to reward companies to do that?"

Top 10 Fun Facts About Robert Redford

Learn 10 fun facts about actor Robert Redford. Redford played on the University of Colorado baseball team as a pitcher. He hates watching his own films. He was originally considered for the part of 'Michael Corleone' in 'The Godfather'. Redford founded the 'Sundance Film Festival'.

Adrian Grenier

Adrian Grenier may share good looks and acting chops with his [Entourage](http://www.hbo.com/entourage/index.html) alter-ego Vince, but the similarities end when it comes to extracurricular activities. Unlike the hard-partying Vince, Grenier is an activist who uses his fame to better impact the world around him. He created [a TV show called "Alter Eco"](http://planetgreen.discovery.com/tv/alter-eco/alter-eco.html) for Discovery Channel's Planet Green, [the website SHFT.com](http://www.shft.com/), which promotes sustainable living through various multimedia, and [supports eco-friendly fashion](http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/natural-beauty-fashion/blogs/adrian-grenier-gets-eco-fashionable). In addition, [he is an Oceana ambassador](http://oceana.org/en/about-us/people-partners/celebrity-supporters/adrian-grenier) and works with [charity:water](http://www.charitywater.org/) to bring safe drinking water to third world countries. And did we mention that [he won the Blue Sky award in 2008](http://www.ecorazzi.com/2008/03/10/adrian-grenier-wins-blue-sky-award-for-environmental-activism/) for his environmental activism?

Entourage's Adrian Grenier Makes a Splash at Charity Event

Adrian Grenier, model and activist Lauren Bush, actress Kristin Chenoweth and a ballroom of glamorous New Yorkers show up at a December 2009 ball to support charity: water, an organization created to help bring clean drinking water to communities around the world.

Meryl Streep

While Streep is often considered one of the greatest screen sirens in history, her passion for environmental health is no act. In 1989, she created [Mothers and Others](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/spotlighthealth/2002-10-18-streep-healthy-kids_x.htm), after reading a Natural Resources Defense Council report regarding pesticides in produce, according to USA Today. The group taught consumers about chemicals and toxins that have become commonplace for non-organic foods. Although [the organization shuttered in 2001](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1594/is_4_12/ai_76020609/), Streep's [fight for environmental food awareness](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/spotlighthealth/2002-10-18-streep-healthy-kids_x.htm) continues today. She is involved with [Children's Health Environmental Coalition](http://healthychild.org/about/), a group that aims to protect children from toxins in water and food sources.

Top 10 Fun Facts About Meryl Streep

Learn 10 fun facts about actress Meryl Streep. While filming "Death Becomes Her," Meryl unintentionally scarred Goldie Hawn's cheek with a shovel. She inadvertently left her Academy Award for "Kramer vs. Kramer" on the back of a toilet. Streep was raised in New Jersey and graduated from Vassar and the Yale School of Drama. As a teen, she was a cheerleader and homecoming queen.

Mark Ruffalo

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A longtime green advocate, things got personal for Mark Ruffalo when hydraulic fracturing or "hydrofracturing" began to disrupt his hometown in upstate New York's Sullivan County. Ruffalo educated himself on the complex practice and has been using his fame to call attention to this destructive method of natural gas extraction. The A-list activist, who founded [Water Defense](http://www.waterdefense.org/), even landed himself on a U.S. terror watch list for organizing screenings of a documentary about natural gas drilling. Ruffalo specifically [seeks to fight gas companies' positive spin](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alison-rose-levy/northeast-fracking_b_968907.html) about the arguably destructive practice. In one memorable forum, he challenged their claim that the extraction method would bring much-needed work to low-income communities. "You don't put everyone else in jeopardy just because its going to bring jobs," he said on the local news, "you don't bring your daughter to the red light district because you're having hard times."

Actor Mark Ruffalo on Hydraulic Fracturing

In an interview for All Terrain, actor Mark Ruffalo discusses his opposition to the natural gas extraction process known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

Alec Baldwin

Actor and activist [Alec Baldwin](http://www.alecbaldwin.com/), know for his role on the sitcom "30 Rock" and for movies like "[The Cooler](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0318374/)" and "[The Departed](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0407887/)," is a staunch advocate for clean energy. [Baldwin told HuffPost's Lynne Peeples](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/02/alec-baldwin-nuclear-power-dirty-energy_n_946555.html), "The biggest problem in the anti-nuclear movement is the constant big lie, and the constant assertion, metronomic assertion, in the industry, that nuclear is clean power." He also tackled the oil industry, saying, "In fairness, the oil industry is ... a bunch of a very, very smart, very shrewd, very necessary, industrialists who did their part and did what was asked of them to get us to where we are now. Now it's time for them to step aside in terms of their primary role." In April 2011, [Baldwin blogged for HuffPost about nuclear power](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alec-baldwin/the-big-lie-of-clean-nucl_b_844161.html), writing, "Fukushima shows us that utility companies reap all of the benefits, while we assume all of the risks."

All Terrain: Alec Baldwin

Natalie Portman

Portman, a vegetarian since childhood, turned full-on vegan after reading Jonathan Safran Foer's book "Eating Animals" last year (although she went back to being a vegetarian during her pregnancy). [She blogged on The Huffington Post](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/natalie-portman/jonathan-safran-foers-idea_b_334407.html), "The human cost of factory farming -- both the compromised welfare of slaughterhouse workers and, even more, the environmental effects of the mass production of animals -- is staggering." She traveled to Rwanda to film [a documentary about endangered gorillas](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/10/natalie_portman.php), she's designed her own [vegan shoes](http://www.ecorazzi.com/2007/12/25/razzi-snap-natalie-portman-announces-new-vegan-shoe-collection/), and is now even sporting [an eco-friendly engagement ring](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/07/natalie-portman-reveals-e_n_805946.html) from husband Benjamin Millepied. Portman's passion for the environment began at a young age - she can even be seen dancing in a very...*unique* [environmental video as a World Patrol Kid](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/06/vintage_video_n.php).

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Natalie Portman Quits Vegan Diet

Natalie Portman's pregnancy cravings take over as the star ditches her uber strict vegan diet for vegetarianism

Brad Pitt

Although he is not the family UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Brad Pitt is one of Hollywood's leading green men. The award-winning actor supports many different facets of green activism, namely animal rights, sustainable living, and green building. Pitt co-founded the "Make It Right" foundation, which rebuilds homes in Katrina-torn New Orleans using affordable eco-friendly technology.
 He also hosted a PBS series focused on green design in 2006, and, together with Angelina Jolie, donated \$2 million to the African Wildlife Sanctuary, says MNN.

Kanye and Rihanna Join Brad Pitt to Help the "Make It Right" Foundation

Rihanna, Kanye West, Snoop Dogg and Cheryl Crow join Brad Pitt to help the "Make it Right" foundation raise vital funds for the completion of 150 environmentally friendly homes for victims of 2005's Hurricane Katrina.

George Clooney

When it comes to green activism, George Clooney doesn't mess around. "You don't want to be a spokesperson unless you are absolutely committed to a cause," the actor said in an interview with TIME magazine. And according to his own logic, Clooney is a total environmental buff. MSN reported that after his role in Syriana, Clooney helped launch Oil Change, a campaign to diminish America's oil dependence. He is also a major human rights activist, protesting in favor of aid for Sudan and Darfur, and even going so far as to get arrested at a protest in March 2012. Clooney drew a parallel between human rights issues and climate disasters in 2010, when he asked Today Show's Ann Curry "If you knew a tsunami, or Katrina or a Haiti earthquake was coming, what would you do to save people?" The rugged actor also tries to stay green in his everyday life. According to MSN, he drives two electric cars, and was the cover photo for Vanity Fair's first green issue.

George Clooney Arrested

Actor George Clooney has been arrested following a protest outside the Sudanese embassy in Washington DC.

Leonardo DiCaprio

DiCaprio is a long-standing environmentalist, who sits on the boards of the Natural Resources Defense Council and Global Green USA. He has created the environmental documentary "The 11th Hour," where he said, "It's clear humans have had a

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devastating impact on our planet's ecological web of life. Because we've waited, because we've turned our backs on nature's warning signs, and because our political and corporate leaders have consistently ignored the overwhelming scientific evidence, the challenges we face are that much more difficult. We are in the environmental age whether we like it or not."
 And just this winter, DiCaprio made headlines for surviving a plane scare in order to get to a summit on saving the world's tigers, donating \$1 million to the World Wildlife Fund.

Top 10 Fun Facts About Leonardo DiCaprio

Learn 10 fun facts about actor Leonardo DiCaprio. Originally, Leo's agent wanted him to change his name to Lenny Williams. He revealed he has OCD. He can speak some German. He was named Leonardo after kicking his mom in the womb, while she stared at Leonardo DaVinci's art. As a child, he was fired from the show 'Romper Room' for bad behavior.

Alicia Silverstone

Once known as the archetypical valley girl Cher in the movie "Clueless," Alicia Silverstone now makes her name as the face of vegan beauty. She wrote a diet book called "The Kind Diet" which she says "is about living your healthiest and happiest life to the fullest, while taking care of mama Earth at the same time." She also regularly updates her blog, The Kind Life, with vegan recipes, beauty tips, and other Earth-friendly finds from the celebrity fashionista. Silverstone recently created a cyber-windstorm for pre-chewing her son Bear Blu's food. "It's natural," she defended herself to Entertainment Tonight.

Alicia Silverstone's Vegan Food Ideas

Alicia Silverstone shares some of the simple, healthy, delicious meals from The Kind Diet.

Sting and Trudie Styler

In 1989, Sting and his wife, Trudie Styler, formed the Rainforest Foundation Fund to preserve rainforests and protect indigenous populations within them. "Sting and I founded the Rainforest Fund after seeing with our own eyes the destruction of one of the world's most precious resources," Styler was quoted as saying in a HuffPost article. "If we all take action, we can help save the planet and prevent further harm to the rainforests and indigenous people who live there."
 Styler blogged for HuffPost that she and Sting founded the Rainforest Foundation Fund after flying over the Amazon and meeting people on the ground there. She said, at first, "Sting was criticized for daring to be a rock star who wanted to change the world." But she says their group has worked to successfully protect over 115,000 square kilometers of rainforest.

Biodynamic Wine with Trudie Styler

Trudie Styler discusses biodynamic wine.

Daryl Hannah

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Actress [Daryl Hannah](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000435/), known for films such as "Blade Runner" and "Splash," has lent her name to several environmental causes. In 2009, she travelled to West Virginia and was arrested while protesting mountaintop removal coal mining. [She wrote for HuffPost](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daryl-hannah/why-i-was-arrested-in-coa_b_224531.html), "I was honored to be joining an inspiring brave group of concerned Americans." More recently, she was [one of over 1,200 people arrested](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/30/daryl-hannah-arrested-keystone-protest_n_942072.html) in August in front of the White House as part of a Keystone XL pipeline protest.

Daryl Hannah Arrested For Environmental Protest

Actress Daryl Hannah's arrest sparks conversation about a planned oil pipeline in Canada.

Pierce Brosnan

This [UNICEF ambassador](http://www.unicef.ie/Content.aspx?PageDetailId=24&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) is known in Hollywood for his Earth-friendly ways. While Brosnan stays environmentally aware on a daily basis by [driving a hybrid car](http://www.hellomagazine.com/celebrities-news-in-pics/19-05-2009/51565/general/), according to Hello! Magazine, he has advocated for sustainable government legislation as well as publicized himself as a major supporter of environmental charities. He's [protested natural gas facilities](http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,1549375,00.html) near his Malibu home, and according to Treehugger.com, spoken in public forums [in support of the EPA and green legislation](http://www.treehugger.com/culture/pierce-brosnan-at-epa-markey-waxman-markey.html). In 1997 he was given an Environmental Leadership Award by Mikhail Gorbachev, and in 2008 Brosnan and his wife Keely Shaye Smith were inducted into the [Environmental Hall of Fame](http://www.ecorazzi.com/2008/10/30/pierce-brosnan-to-be-inducted-into-environmental-hall-of-fame/).

Top 10 Fun Facts About Pierce Brosnan

Learn 10 fun facts about actor Pierce Brosnan. He once worked in the circus as a professional fire-eater. He is claustrophobic. Pierce is an avid supporter of same-sex marriage and gay adoption. Pierce was nicknamed 'Colonel Chunky' by the cast of 'Mamma Mia!'.

Woody Harrelson

Actor [Woody Harrelson](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000437/) has reportedly been [a vegan for nearly 25 years](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/09/23/woody-harrelson-vegan-ac_n_295765.html). In fact, for the 2009 film "Zombieland," Harrelson ate a special vegan Twinkie instead of the real thing. Harrelson has also [called for greater activism against oil](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/huff-wires/20070927/people-woody-harrelson/). Speaking at a media and technology conference in Amsterdam in 2007, Harrelson said, "Certainly (oil companies) just want to get as much out of the ground and make as much money as possible before they transition into anything else. So I still think it's time for some strong activism, especially as it relates to our dependency on oil."

Woody Harrelson Talks Rampart Transformation

The veteran actor opens up about being a jerk and dropping weight to play a corrupt LAPD cop. Costars Robin Wright and Ben Foster also weigh in.

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Glenn Close

According to the Mother Nature Network, <http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/arts-culture/stories/ecologywood-glenn-close-dwayne-the-rock-johnson-eric-stoltz-lucy-lawle> Glenn Close is a major puppy activist. She works with not one, but two organizations devoted to helping her canine companions. Close and husband David Shaw founded [Fetchdog.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/24/www.fetchdog.com), an online shopping site for doggie treats which donates a portion of the sales to dog related charities. In addition, [Oprah.com](http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Puppies-Behind-Bars-Helps-the-Disabled/3) reported that Close is also a staunch supporter of [Puppies Behind Bars](http://www.puppiesbehindbars.org/about.asp), a program that helps service dogs and prisoners have a symbiotic, educational relationship. Close also supports non-canine causes. In 2009, [the ocean conservation group Oceana](http://www.ammado.com/nonprofit/45792/articles/10064) honored her at their annual Sea Change Summer party, noting the actress's [dedication to ocean conservation](http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/arts-culture/stories/ecologywood-hanging-with-celebs-at-the-oceana-fundraiser).

One Mind For Research Interview With Glenn Close

Glenn Close discusses the impact of Stigma on those with Mental Health disorders.

Colin Firth

Who would've thought Mr. Darcy could be a shopkeeper? Colin Firth has set up various eco-themed shops in Britain. He opened two fair trade cafes called Progreso ([at least one of which closed in 2010](http://www.standard.co.uk/news/new-fears-for-portobello-as-sam-cams-favourite-butchers-join-the-casualty-list-6424931.html)), and [an ecological store called Eco in Chiswick](http://www.treehugger.com/sustainable-product-design/colin-firths-eco-store.html), offering ethical, fair trade goods, as well as expert energy efficiency advice for homeowners. As [an Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign supporter](http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/ambassadors/colin-firth), Colin Firth raises awareness on behalf of Ethiopian coffee growers, and lobbies for fair trade in the coffee markets. [According to *The Times*](http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/the_way_we_live/article2856825.ece), Firth said that "rather than being a luvvie with a lofty opinion preaching to people, I prefer to do things, to get involved, put my money where my mouth is and learn along the way."

The Life and Career of Colin Firth

No lady can resist this Academy Award Winning Brit's sensitivity and charm. Join WatchMojo as we take a look at the career of Colin Firth.

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**Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Chillicothe Gazette - Online**

11/20/2012

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

12:04 PM,

Nov 17, 2012

|

PITTSBURGH - Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options and risks for the Obama administration.

It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind, said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see incredible job gains that could lead to a re-industrialization of America. Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks, Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide Beyond Natural Gas campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok.

We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems, said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and

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environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. How much a part is a big fight right now, Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film *Promised Land* is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some financing for the project came from the United Arab Emirates — a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy.

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

Yes, we are concerned, said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development. He added that federal intrusion is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track, Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development, said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be some attempts to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement, said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. That might make

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them a bit more open to regulatory oversight.

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a big opportunity for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. I don't think the president can punt this one, he said.

Whatever Obama does, it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy in the environmental community, Shellenberger said.

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University At Buffalo Closes Its Shale Gas Research Institute Amid Accusations Of Undisclosed Industry Ties Huffington Post, The

11/20/2012

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The University at Buffalo on Monday closed its seven-month-old shale gas research institute, which was under investigation by the State University Board of Trustees after a group of professors accused it of having undisclosed ties to industry.

UB President Satish Tripathi acknowledged that the university's policies governing disclosure of financial interests had been "inconsistently applied" and the appearance of independence and integrity of the institute's research impacted.

"Research of such considerable societal importance and impact cannot be effectively conducted with a cloud of uncertainty over its work," Tripathi said in a letter to the university community announcing the closure. He said the decision followed an internal assessment of the institute.

Environmental groups have been critical of the institute since May, a month after its opening, when it released its first report. The report concluded that state regulators in Pennsylvania have improved oversight of the gas drilling industry and New York's regulations will prevent major environmental impacts. The university at first said the study was peer-reviewed, but later withdrew that statement.

A coalition of faculty, staff, students and alumni subsequently questioned the report's academic integrity and called for an inquiry into the institute's industry ties.

"This is a victory for real science over junk science peddled by the gas industry," Rebecca Weber of the New York Public Interest Research Group said in a statement.

All three of the May report's lead authors have ties to the energy industry as well as being academicians, but institute Director John Martin has said that the study was funded entirely by the University at Buffalo with no industry support.

Martin did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

The State University of New York Board of Trustees in September passed a resolution requiring UB to answer questions about the formation of the institute and involvement of natural gas companies in the publication of its report.

The resolution followed an open letter to the UB administration signed by more than 80 current and former faculty members concerned that controversy had tarnished UB's credibility as a major research university.

"Given the questions that continue to surround the Shale Resources and Society Institute, SUNY administration and the Board of Trustees support the University of Buffalo's decision to close it," SUNY said in a statement Monday. "The board and SUNY reserve further comment at this time while the board completes its formal review of the SRSI with the anticipation that its findings will be discussed in a future public meeting."

Shale gas drilling hasn't been allowed in New York since the Department of Environmental Conservation began a review in 2008 to address impacts from horizontal drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which uses millions of gallons of chemically treated water per well to crack shale and release gas.

"The issues associated with natural gas production from shale are broad and complex with extensive public implications,"

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Tripathi wrote Monday. "It is with these considerations in mind that we must assess the mission and practices of the Shale Resources and Society Institute."

Associated Press Writer Mary Esch contributed to this report from Albany.

State Lawmakers And Environmental Activists Express Opposition To Hydro Fracking

NEW YORK, NY - JANUARY 11: Opponents of hydraulic fracturing in New York state attend a news conference and rally against hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, on January 11, 2012 in New York City. The event, which was held on the steps of City Hall, called for an end to the controversial gas drilling method as environmental groups increasingly warn about contamination of the state's aquifers that could poison its drinking water. (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

State Lawmakers And Environmental Activists Express Opposition To Hydro Fracking

NEW YORK, NY - JANUARY 11: Eric Weltman of Food & Water Watch attends a news conference and rally against hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, in New York State on January 11, 2012 in New York City. The event, which was held on the steps of City Hall, called for an end to the controversial gas drilling method as environmental groups increasingly warn about contamination of the state's aquifers that could poison its drinking water. (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

Department Of Environmental Conservation Holds Hydro Fracking Hearing

NEW YORK, NY - NOVEMBER 30: Opponents and supporters of gas-drilling, or fracking, walk into the last of four public hearings on proposed fracking regulations in upstate New York on November 30, 2011 in New York City. Fracking, a process that injects millions of gallons of chemical mixed water into a well in order to release gas, has become a contentious issue in New York as critics of the process believe it contaminates drinking water among other hazards. New York City gets much of its drinking water from upstate reservoirs. If the regulations are approved, drilling in the upstate New York Marcellus Shale could begin next year. (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers at work on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: General views of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region.

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Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers look at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region.

Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: A lump of shale rock on display at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers at work on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Drill heads on display at the entrance to the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: An engineer displays a lump of shale rock at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

Hydraulic Fracturing Prevention Press Conference

NEW YORK, NY - APRIL 25: Actor/director Mark Ruffalo (C) speaks at the Hydraulic Fracturing prevention press conference urging the protection of the drinking water source of 15 million Americans at Foley Square on April 25, 2011 in New York City. (Photo by D Dipasupil/Getty Images)

Hydraulic Fracturing Prevention Press Conference

NEW YORK, NY - APRIL 25: (L-R) Actor/director Mark Ruffalo, Denise Katzman, Wenonah Hauter, and Water Defense co-founder/campaign director Claire Sandberg attend the Hydraulic Fracturing prevention press conference urging the protection of the drinking water source of 15 million Americans at Foley Square on April 25, 2011 in New York City. (Photo by D Dipasupil/Getty Images)

Josh Fox on Obama, the EPA, and House Republicans Who Had Him Arrested

HuffPost Green Editor Joanna Zelman talks to Josh Fox, director of the documentary 'Gasland,' about hydro-fracking, the EPA, and the House Republicans who had him arrested during a Congressional hearing.

Game Changer in Green: Mark Ruffalo

The expertise and the grassroots zeal Mark Ruffalo has brought to the issue of fracking is changing the game in green.

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Ontario won't allow fracking for gas without evidence it's safe: McGuinty | CTV News
CTV news

11/20/2012

Text:

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The Canadian Press

Published Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2012 4:13PM EST

TORONTO -- Ontario would need to see scientific proof that hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is safe before it allows energy companies to use the controversial practice to extract natural gas, Premier Dalton McGuinty said Tuesday.

No private companies have approached the province to request permission to frack, which involves the use of chemically-treated water under extreme pressure in drill holes to fracture underground shale and release gas or oil.

"If somebody was to approach us and say would you consider fracking in Ontario, I think the first thing we'd have to say is: 'Hang on a second now. We're going to have to take a look at the latest evidence associated with fracking, the risks. There have been some experts who've written about the risks associated with water,'" said McGuinty.

"I think we'd have to take a long hard look at the scientific evidence before we'd give a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down, but at this point in time, it's purely academic."

The New Democrats shared McGuinty's concerns about negative environmental impacts from fracking, especially on drinking water.

"We've been watching what's been happening across the country and across North America on the fracking issue, and one of the things we're obviously concerned about is making sure that water tables are safe, making sure that the process doesn't threaten other important environmental considerations," said NDP Leader Andrea Horwath.

However, the Progressive Conservatives said they were "very optimistic" about the jobs that could be created if fracking were approved in Ontario.

"There's 100 years of affordable energy that can come from it," said PC energy critic Vic Fedeli.

"We're very encouraged by it and everything we've seen to this point, from all the engineers and experts, talks about the safety and the environmental safety of it."

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The Council of Canadians opposes fracking, and wants Ontario to follow Quebec's lead and impose a moratorium on the practice. It warns fracking in Ontario could have serious long-term and cumulative impacts on the Great Lakes.

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Nova Scotia had some fracking operations in 2007-08, but the NDP government has said it won't approve any more hydraulic fracturing until a review of the process is completed in 2014.

A report done for the New Brunswick government, released in October, said the province should proceed with shale gas exploration but with a phased-in approach that would limit it to one to three sites to allow for research and development.

The B.C. Oil and Gas Commission said in September that a spate of small earthquakes in the province's northeastern corner were caused by fracking in the Horn River Basin, a gas-rich shale formation that's attracted some of the industry's biggest players. The 38 quakes ranged between magnitudes of 2.2 and 3.8 on the Richter scale.

Last December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for the first time, implicated fracking in causing ground water pollution. The EPA announced it found compounds likely associated with fracking chemicals in the groundwater beneath a Wyoming community where residents say their well water reeked of chemicals.

The issue has caught the attention of some celebrities, with Yoko Ono, Paul McCartney, Lady Gaga and actor Alec Baldwin joining Artists Against Fracking in New York state.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

Obama faces critical decision on domestic gas exploration New Orleans City Business - Online

11/20/2012

Obama faces critical decision on domestic gas exploration

12:18 pm Mon, November 19, 2012 POSTED: 12:18 PM Monday, November 19, 2012

BY:

The Associated Press

TAGS: fracking , hydraulic fracturing

Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options — and risks — for the Obama administration.

"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

"But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks," Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as "Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok."

"We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and

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environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. "How much a part is a big fight right now," Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film *Promised Land* is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some financing for the project came from the United Arab Emirates — a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that "you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy."

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

"Yes, we are concerned," said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. "Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development." He added that federal intrusion "is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

"He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track," Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

"I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development," said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be "some attempts" to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

"A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement," said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. "That might make

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Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a "big opportunity" for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that "if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks" that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. "I don't think the president can punt this one," he said.

Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger said.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

**Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WGN-AM - Online**

11/20/2012

11:51 a.m. CST, November 19, 2012

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

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Nov. 21

Ontario won't allow fracking for gas without evidence it's safe: McGuinty **CKGL-AM - Online**

11/20/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

Public News Service - WY
Public News Service - Online

11/20/2012

News By Region

Home & State-Issue

Public News Service - WY: Energy Policy

CASPER, Wyo. - A federal study of the use of silica in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in oil and gas fields found that workers are sometimes overexposed to silica dust, which can lead to silicosis. It's a disease that reduces the lungs' ability to take in oxygen. Silica can also cause lung cancer.

CASPER, Wyo. - Higher bills are on the way, again. Rocky Mountain Power (RMP) is requesting a rate hike for the sixth year in a row, citing the need to cover rising electricity costs, population growth, pollution control, and transmission and power-plant maintenance. The Wyoming Public Service Commission

PAVILLION, Wyo. - The best way to find the "smoking gun" is to follow the smoke to the tip of the barrel. A hydrologist makes that point after being hired by environmental groups to review the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigation that suggests a connection between hydraulic fracturing

PAVILLION, Wyo. - The Environmental Protection Agency's study of groundwater contamination and links to hydraulic fracturing in Pavillion is the topic of a U.S. House subcommittee hearing today in Washington.

No one locally affected was invited to the hearing before the House Energy and Environment

CASPER, Wyo. - Most Wyoming voters think you can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time, according to a new poll of attitudes throughout the Rockies. Lori Weigel with the Republican polling firm Public Opinion Strategies also found near-unanimous support among Wyoming voters

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LARAMIE, Wyo. - A plan to get much-needed water to Colorado's Front Range has come back to life, although a coalition of 10 conservation groups is hoping it is short-lived. The Flaming Gorge Pipeline proposal is sitting before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, after being dropped by the U.S.

LARAMIE, Wyo. - The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is undertaking a self-imposed "re-do" of about 80 land-use plans in Wyoming and throughout the West, to add new protections for the Greater Sage Grouse. Grouse populations have declined as oil and gas drilling, wind energy development, grazing

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

Public News Service - WY
Public News Service - Online

11/20/2012

News By Region

Home & State-Issue

Public News Service - WY: Endangered Species & Wildlife

CODY, Wyo. - Wyoming's first national forest is getting an update, and time is running out for the public to have a say in what the Shoshone National Forest will look like in the future. The deadline for public comments is Monday, Nov. 26.

Connie Wilbert, field organizer for the Sierra Club in Wyo

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - Wyoming's push to have the federal roadless rule overturned has ended at the U.S. Supreme Court. The high court has refused to take the case, which contended that prohibiting road-building in national forest back-country was creating wilderness. That is a job only Congress can do.

JACKSON, Wyo. - The rise in backyard chicken-keeping has led to a rise in conflicts in bear country. Once bears get a taste of chicken, they don't forget.

Education campaigns long have been in place in Wyoming to encourage people to keep trash, and even bird feeders, away from bears. Chickens are t

CODY, Wyo. - Ten percent of the jobs in Cody are directly connected to spending on fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing. The town was a case study in a new report from Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development that looked at rural community economic health and public lands management.

Mike Dar

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Public News Service - WY
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ROCK SPRINGS, Wyo. - Oil-shale development possibilities on public lands in Wyoming are getting a fresh look from the Bureau of Land Management.

A hearing is set for Friday in Rock Springs, and meetings also are being held in Colorado and Utah.

While oil shale often is touted as a solution to feed

LARAMIE, Wyo. - The town of Pavillion, Wyo., is one of the stars of a documentary being shown today in Laramie and Thursday in Cheyenne. "Gasland" features landowner experiences with natural-gas drilling in 24 states.

Film director Josh Fox became interested in those stories after turning down an e

CASPER, Wyo. - Public health, energy policy and the environment were voted on specifically more than 20 times when the U.S. House recently approved a new spending bill, according to a new scorecard from the national League of Conservation Voters. Votes on specific issues were tracked, and because th

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - A hybrid in every garage is the mantra behind a new campaign by more than a dozen environmental groups to increase the car fuel efficiency standard to 60 miles per gallon (mpg), but in Wyoming, families are more likely to drive trucks. The National Resource Defense Council clean veh

CASPER, Wyo. - The coal industry is cleaning up its act when it comes to air pollution, according to a new report from the Clean Air Task Force that outlines connections between coal-fired power plant emissions and premature deaths. In fact, the number of yearly deaths has been cut almost in half si

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - The EPA is taking a close look at what happens to air quality when oil and gas drilling operations move in. The agency is updating industry rules for monitoring and reducing pollution, which can include chemicals used in production, as well as the usual pollution: ozone and particle

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - Wyoming jobs are being debated at a hearing today before the U.S. House and Senate Western Caucuses. Up for examination at the so-called "War on Western Jobs" hearing are what the caucuses claim are the negative impacts of administration policies, or proposed policies, on public lan

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

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Last December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for the first time, implicated fracking in causing ground water pollution. The EPA announced it found compounds likely associated with fracking chemicals in the groundwater beneath a Wyoming community where residents say their well water reeked of chemicals.

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Gas Official Says EPA Study Could Drive New Fracking Rules Under SDWA Inside EPA Weekly Report

11/20/2012

Gas Official Says EPA Study Could Drive New Fracking Rules Under SDWA

A key natural gas industry official is suggesting that if EPA decides to make the case for expanding federal oversight of hydraulic fracturing based on results from its upcoming study of the practice, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) would be the most logical place to do that -- though the industry is opposed to such an approach and Congress would first need to reverse a statutory exemption before the agency could regulate the practice.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

New York Fracking Regulations Decision Delayed Into 2013, Governor Cuomo Announces Huffington Post, The

11/20/2012

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A health impact review of shale gas drilling by national experts will make it impossible to meet a looming deadline for new fracking regulations, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Tuesday, pushing a much-delayed decision on the contentious issue into 2013.

The Department of Environmental Conservation has been doing an environmental impact study and drafting new regulations for high-volume hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, since 2008. Shale drilling has been on hold since then amid health and environmental worries surrounding fracking, which stimulates a well's production by injecting huge volumes of chemical-laced water to crack deep, gas-rich shale deposits.

The deadline for finalizing regulations is Nov. 29 under the state Administrative Procedures Act, which says a proposed rule expires 365 days after the last public hearing unless it's officially adopted by then. If the regulation isn't finalized by the deadline, the agency has 90 days to submit a new notice of rulemaking, and another 90 days to complete the job. That could potentially delay a final decision for six months. The public would have the opportunity to comment during that time.

A panel of three nationally recognized public health experts was named last week to review the state's health impact study of fracking. Cuomo told a radio interviewer Tuesday he sees no way the panel's work can be completed by the end of next week.

Asked about it at a press conference Tuesday at the Javits Center in New York City, Cuomo said he doesn't have a timeline for completion of the health review and fracking regulations, but he doesn't expect it to be finished within the next week.

"This is a big decision for the state," Cuomo said. "It has potential economic benefits if the state goes forward with fracking, but we want to make sure it's safe and we want to make sure the environment is protected, people are protected and that's why we're doing a health assessment."

The experts chosen for the health review were John Adgate, chairman of the Environmental and Occupational Health Department at the Colorado School of Public Health; Lynn Goldman, dean of George Washington University's School of Public Health and Health Services; and Richard Jackson, chairman of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the University of California Los Angeles' Fielding School of Public Health.

Goldman said Tuesday she hadn't seen the state's health impact assessment yet and didn't know how extensive it was. But she said she planned to have her review completed by the end of next week because of her schedule of other commitments. Goldman said her contract with the state set a deadline of Feb. 12, but she had been told in an email that officials wanted the review done by Dec. 3.

"Generally, I'm applauding them for making the effort," Goldman said of New York's health study. "I hope the outcome of our doing this review helps the state make a wise decision."

Industry groups have criticized the choice of health experts to review the state study, saying they're biased against the industry.

"Each of these experts has shown a troubling willingness to speak publicly about supposed dangers and risks of hydraulic

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fracturing," said Lee Fuller, executive director of the industry group Energy In Depth. "While voicing concerns is an understandable and at times necessary function of scientific progress, these experts have chosen to make statements that contradict well established scientific conclusions about both hydraulic fracturing and shale development."

John Krohn, a spokesman for Energy In Depth, said the natural gas industry will give Cuomo its own list of health experts, "so that independent panel can have an increased diversity of opinion, which in our view is needed."

Environmental and health groups have praised the choice of panelists and were cheered at word of the latest delay in a final decision on whether fracking will be allowed in New York.

"We are glad the Governor wants to 'do this right,'" said Sandra Steingraber, a representative from the anti-fracking coalition New Yorkers Against Fracking. "We are confident that a thorough, independent review of the health impacts of fracking will show it can't be done safely."

Associated Press reporter Ula Illytzyk in New York City contributed to this report.

State Lawmakers And Environmental Activists Express Opposition To Hydro Fracking

NEW YORK, NY - JANUARY 11: Opponents of hydraulic fracturing in New York state attend a news conference and rally against hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, on January 11, 2012 in New York City. The event, which was held on the steps of City Hall, called for an end to the controversial gas drilling method as environmental groups increasingly warn about contamination of the state's aquifers that could poison its drinking water. (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

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Department Of Environmental Conservation Holds Hydro Fracking Hearing

NEW YORK, NY - NOVEMBER 30: Opponents and supporters of gas-drilling, or fracking, walk into the last of four public hearings on proposed fracking regulations in upstate New York on November 30, 2011 in New York City. Fracking, a process that injects millions of gallons of chemical mixed water into a well in order to release gas, has become a contentious issue in New York as critics of the process believe it contaminates drinking water among other hazards. New York City gets much of its drinking water from upstate reservoirs. If the regulations are approved, drilling in the upstate New York Marcellus Shale could begin next year. (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

Cuadrilla Shale Fracking Plant

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers at work on the drilling platform of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: General views of the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: Engineers look at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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PRESTON, LANCASHIRE - OCTOBER 07: A lump of shale rock on display at the Cuadrilla shale fracking facility on October 7, 2012 in Preston, Lancashire. The controversial method of extracting gas by pumping high pressure water and chemicals into shale formations deep underground has been blamed for two minor earthquakes in the surrounding region. Environmental campaigners are calling for a halt to the drilling of what Cuadrilla believe could be significant reserves of natural gas. (Photo by Matthew Lloyd/Getty Images)

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Hydraulic Fracturing Prevention Press Conference

NEW YORK, NY - APRIL 25: Actor/director Mark Ruffalo (C) speaks at the Hydraulic Fracturing prevention press conference urging the protection of the drinking water source of 15 million Americans at Foley Square on April 25, 2011 in New York City. (Photo by D Dipasupil/Getty Images)

Hydraulic Fracturing Prevention Press Conference

NEW YORK, NY - APRIL 25: (L-R) Actor/director Mark Ruffalo, Denise Katzman, Wenonah Hauter, and Water Defense co-founder/campaign director Claire Sandberg attend the Hydraulic Fracturing prevention press conference urging the protection of the drinking water source of 15 million Americans at Foley Square on April 25, 2011 in New York City. (Photo by D Dipasupil/Getty Images)

Josh Fox on Obama, the EPA, and House Republicans Who Had Him Arrested

HuffPost Green Editor Joanna Zelman talks to Josh Fox, director of the documentary 'Gasland,' about hydro-fracking, the EPA, and the House Republicans who had him arrested during a Congressional hearing.

Game Changer in Green: Mark Ruffalo

The expertise and the grassroots zeal Mark Ruffalo has brought to the issue of fracking is changing the game in green.

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No fracking without proof it's safe: McGuinty
MSN Money Canada

11/20/2012

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"I think we'd have to take a long hard look at the scientific evidence before we'd give a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down, but at this point in time, it's purely academic."

The New Democrats shared McGuinty's concerns about negative environmental impacts from fracking, especially on drinking water.

"We've been watching what's been happening across the country and across North America on the fracking issue, and one of the things we're obviously concerned about is making sure that water tables are safe, making sure that the process doesn't threaten other important environmental considerations," said NDP Leader Andrea Horwath.

However, the Progressive Conservatives said they were "very optimistic" about the jobs that could be created if fracking were approved in Ontario.

"There's 100 years of affordable energy that can come from it," said PC energy critic Vic Fedeli.

"We're very encouraged by it and everything we've seen to this point, from all the engineers and experts, talks about the safety and the environmental safety of it."

Opponents of fracking said companies including Mooncor Oil and Gas and Dundee Energy are buying up land in southwestern Ontario, especially the Kettle Point area on Lake Huron, that could be used for fracking.

"Mooncor has not announced any plans to frack in Ontario," company spokesman Nick Tsimidis said in an email Tuesday. Dundee Energy did not immediately reply to requests for an interview.

The Council of Canadians opposes fracking, and wants Ontario to follow Quebec's lead and impose a moratorium on the practice. It warns fracking in Ontario could have serious long-term and cumulative impacts on the Great Lakes.

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**Editorial: Corn - Congress can fix our senseless ethanol policy
Fayetteville Observer - Online**

11/20/2012

If a bipartisan coalition in Congress and a rare alliance of petroleum producers, food producers and environmentalists couldn't do it, we're not sure what will.

But that still doesn't make federal insistence on adding ethanol to our gasoline sensible. The Environmental Protection Agency's stubborn grip on proven folly is especially aggravating in a year when drought destroyed as much as half of the nation's corn crop and sent prices soaring.

This is pushing up the cost of gasoline and food, even as consumers continue to suffer from slow economic recovery.

Earlier this year, nearly a dozen states, multiple industries (farm, beef and pork groups among them), members of Congress and environmental groups asked the EPA to at least temporarily waive the federal mandate to blend ethanol with gasoline.

The EPA responded last week that it ran the numbers and didn't see that cutting back ethanol use would help reduce prices.

The federal ethanol requirement has caused problems and added expenses to food production since it was imposed in 2005. While farmers increased corn production for the new market, the need for billions of gallons of ethanol a year (13.2 billion this year) has driven up prices for food producers who use corn directly in making food, or indirectly, as a cattle and pork feed. Since corn products are so prevalent, the result was a price increase in a broad array of foods in grocery stores.

The overarching goal here was to move America toward energy self-sufficiency. There is no evidence that ethanol has had much effect in doing that. Rather, self-sufficiency is arriving through no fault of ethanol's. It's coming from the new petroleum extraction technology - horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing - that have so increased America's oil and gas production that we're on the verge of becoming an exporter.

Further, new research is leading to distilling techniques that will produce alcohol from non-food products. A \$170 million biofuel refinery proposed for Sampson County has gotten its construction go-aheads and may be producing 20 million gallons of ethanol a year from switchgrass and similar grasses, starting in 2014.

How to fix this? Friends of the Earth biofuels expert Michal Rosenoer suggests a path: "If the worst U.S. drought in more than 50 years and skyrocketing food prices are not enough to make the EPA act, it falls to Congress to provide relief from our senseless federal support for corn ethanol."

OK, Congress. This should be easy. Do it.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

**Ontario won't allow fracking for gas without evidence it's safe: McGuinty
CKTB-AM (News Talk 610) - Online**

11/20/2012

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Content Provided By Canadian Press.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

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CFTR-AM (680 News) - Online

11/20/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
Daily Times - Online, The

11/20/2012

Range Resources site manager Don Robinson is seen in July 2011 near the well head at a drilling site in Washington, Pa. Range Resources and other energy companies and environmental groups are wondering how President Barack Obama's re-election will affect the boom in shale natural gas drilling. / AP

PITTSBURGH, Pa. Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options and risks for the Obama administration.

"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

"But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks," Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as "Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok."

"We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. "How much a part is a big fight right now," Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their

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star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film *Promised Land* is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some financing for the project came from a company in the United Arab Emirates — a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that "you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy."

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

"Yes, we are concerned," said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. "Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development." He added that federal intrusion "is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

"He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track," Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

"I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development," said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be "some attempts" to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

"A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement," said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. "That might make them a bit more open to regulatory oversight."

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a "big opportunity" for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that "if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks" that could lead to

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massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. "I don't think the president can punt this one," he said.

Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger said.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

Ontario not ready to allow fracking CBC News Online

11/20/2012

new

Ontario not ready to allow fracking

The Canadian Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

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Ontario not ready to allow fracking

The Canadian Press

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Brandon Sun - Online

11/20/2012

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices Daily Reporter - Online, The

11/20/2012

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices

By Kevin Begos

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge.

Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy during the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options, and risks, for the Obama administration.

"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities such as that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

"But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks," Ebinger said.

Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site July 27, 2011, in Washington, Pa. Energy companies and environmental groups are both wondering how President Barack Obama's re-election will affect the boom in shale natural gas drilling. (AP file photo by Keith Srakocic)

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but also has raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club already is trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. The issue also resonates in states such as Wisconsin and Minnesota, where the fine silica sand is mined for the drilling process. It's started a nationwide "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as "Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok."

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

"We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. "How much a part is a big fight right now," Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film *Promised Land* is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some financing for the project came from a company in the United Arab Emirates, a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that "you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy."

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

"Yes, we are concerned," said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. "Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development." He added that federal intrusion "is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

"He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track," Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

"I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development," said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be "some attempts" to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry said exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

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Study aims to resolve fracking's impact on water

Mary Bernard, Vernal Express

The Environmental Protection Agency announced plans to study the effect of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water nationwide.

Published in the Federal Register on Nov. 5, the EPA states the study arose in response to public concern.

While the agency is soliciting public involvement, the EPA said it will give preference to peer-reviewed literature sources.

This will be a two-year study. It will follow the entire cycle of hydraulic fracturing fluid, from water acquisition to chemical mixing to injection to flowback management and disposal

The boom in natural gas production nationally has been expanded by hydraulic fracturing technology, which critics claim hastens damage to air and water.

To date, there has been only one case of groundwater contamination by fracking fluid designated by the EPA in the Pavillion, Wyo., natural gas field.

These findings remain muddled as only one EPA follow-up test from a deep well found "synthetic chemicals" consistent with fracking fluid, but none of the drinking water wells produced similar fluids.

In a co-testing effort the U.S Geological Survey was unable to replicate the results found by the EPA. However, drinking water wells in the Pavillion area did produce high levels of methane, which is a byproduct of natural gas drilling.

The EPA will conduct five roundtables this month focused on each stage of the water cycle, according to the website.

"Based on feedback from these roundtables, the EPA will host in-depth technical workshops to address specific issues in greater detail," states the website. Interested persons should watch the website for information at <http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/stakeholder-roadmap.html>.

—Mary Bernard, Vernal Express

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Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

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EPA should set record straight

November 20, 2012

Tribune Chronicle | TribToday.com

Americans have been drilling wells for oil and gas for more than a century and a half. Hydraulic fracturing - or fracking - has been in use to augment well production for decades.

Yet it has been only during the past few years that a gusher of propaganda about fracking has surfaced. Incredibly, some public officials, such as those in New York state, have allowed it to dictate policy.

What about the facts on fracking and other oil and gas industry practices? A variety of studies indicate there is little or no danger of groundwater being contaminated by chemicals used in fracking, as the industry points out.

Nevertheless, the Environmental Protection Agency has launched a comprehensive study of fracking. Earlier this month, EPA official George Paulson said a progress report on the study should be released by the end of this year. A final report is due in 2014, he added.

Good. The EPA's progress report should give scientists, the gas and oil industry, and those worried about fracking opportunities to check the agency's methodology. EPA officials, sometimes accused of bowing to the demands of radical environmentalists rather than basing policy on science, should welcome the oversight.

There indeed are some valid concerns about fracking, primarily involving well casings used to keep chemicals out of groundwater. But rejecting the practice altogether, in view of what appears to be an excellent environmental record, makes no sense. The EPA study should provide solid, science-based guidance that will safeguard the environment while allowing Americans to get at the gigantic supplies of natural gas underneath our feet.

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**Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices
WPMT-TV - Online**

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12:51 p.m. EST, November 19, 2012

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

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Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

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Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

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November, 19 2012 11:04 pm

Study calls for scrutiny of air emissions at gas well sites

☐ Ozone precursors' found, also said to be a cause for concern

Glenwood Springs Post Independent

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colorado - A Paonia-based scientific organization, the Endocrine Disruption Exchange, has detected high concentrations of potentially toxic emissions from gas wells that show up early in the drilling process, rather than during hydraulic fracturing of the well.

The importance of the study's findings, according to an abstract included with the document, is that nonmethane hydrocarbons (NMHCs), which the study states can cause serious negative health effects at levels well below government standards, are inadequately understood and must be examined for their possible health impacts.

The study also found compounds that are "ozone precursors," meaning they contribute to the formation of ozone at ground level, which is another source of concern for human health.

An energy industry spokesman, however, doubted the accuracy of the findings in the study.

David Ludlam, executive director of the West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association, noted that the study "readily acknowledges" that the air samples gathered near the wells yielded a high degree of variability in the study's findings.

In addition, he pointed to a statement in the study itself, that the chemicals found in the air samples cannot be "causally connected" to gas drilling operations.

"Yet despite this variability and lack of causality, they still attempt to extrapolate trends and attribute detected chemicals to the gas well," Ludlam commented. "This seems less of a study supporting their theory of health impacts due to natural gas activity, than it is that they disagree with long-standing NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) health and safety standards."

The Endocrine Disruption Exchange (TEDX), founded by environmental health analyst Dr. Theo Colborn, issued the study, "An Exploratory Study of Air Quality near Natural Gas Operations," on Nov. 9.

Colborn told the Post Independent on Monday that the variability in the findings was because "it's a mixture down there (in the well), under all kinds of conditions.

"This is just stuff that's coming up out of the ground," Colborn said. "I thought the variability made the study's findings

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more credible."

Regarding the lack of "causality," Colborn said that could only be cured by conducting a much more comprehensive and expensive study on the well pad itself, capturing the gases as they escape from the well without any dilution from the air.

"This is the kind of study that the EPA would love to do, that they should be doing," she said. But, she added, the agency has been locked out of scrutiny of the oil and gas industry by the 2005 Clean Water Act exemptions enacted by the Bush administration.

Colborn conceded that the study is critical of NIOSH and OSHA standards for the chemicals detected near gas wells, as well as cautionary about the need to further study industry practices.

"We need new laws," she said emphatically. "We definitely need new laws."

Suspected compounds affect human endocrine system

The data in the study comes from weekly air quality sampling conducted for more than a year, from July 2010 until October 2011, from the TEDX sampling equipment set up less than a quarter of a mile from a new natural gas well pad.

The NMHCs, according to study, have "multiple health effects, including 30 (compounds) that affect the endocrine system, which is susceptible to chemical impacts at very low concentrations, far less than government safety standards."

The human endocrine system, according to the American Medical Association, is made up of hormone-secreting glands that regulate the body's rate of growth, metabolism, and sexual development and function.

The TEDX abstract stated that some compounds detected at the well site were found at concentrations greater than levels known to have caused developmental problems and low IQ scores in children in urban tests.

The study also called for more study of ozone precursors, chemicals that combine to create ozone. While beneficial at high altitudes due to its ability to screen harmful solar radiation, at ground level ozone is considered a health hazard to humans.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, "breathing ozone can trigger a variety of health problems including chest pain, coughing, throat irritation and congestion. It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema and asthma. Ground level ozone also can reduce lung function and inflame the linings of the lungs. Repeated exposure may permanently scar lung tissue."

For Colborn, the study is a warning.

"I think what our paper shows is ... we'd better start thinking about (well) density," she remarked.

With drilling going on in and around semi-rural, relatively dense areas of Garfield County, she said, "Maybe there should be a limit to the numbers they allow" to avoid saturating the air with pollutants."

jcolson@postindependent.com

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Study calls for scrutiny of air emissions at gas well sites Glenwood Springs Post Independent - Online

11/20/2012

'Ozone precursors' found, also said to be a cause for concern

John Colson Post Independent Staff Glenwood Springs, Colorado CO

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The human endocrine system, according to the American Medical Association, is made up of hormone-secreting glands that regulate the body's rate of growth, metabolism, and sexual development and function.

The TEDX abstract stated that some compounds detected at the well site were found at concentrations greater than levels known to have caused developmental problems and low IQ scores in children in urban tests.

The study also called for more study of ozone precursors, chemicals that combine to create ozone. While beneficial at high altitudes due to its ability to screen harmful solar radiation, at ground level ozone is considered a health hazard to humans.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, "breathing ozone can trigger a variety of health problems including chest pain, coughing, throat irritation and congestion. It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema and asthma. Ground level ozone also can reduce lung function and inflame the linings of the lungs. Repeated exposure may permanently scar lung tissue."

For Colborn, the study is a warning.

"I think what our paper shows is ... we'd better start thinking about (well) density," she remarked.

With drilling going on in and around semi-rural, relatively dense areas of Garfield County, she said, "Maybe there should be a limit to the numbers they allow" to avoid saturating the air with pollutants."

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Murray Energy lays off 160 miners in response to Obama's reelection World Socialist Website, The

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Murray Energy lays off 160 miners in response to Obama's reelection

By Clement Daly

20 November 2012

Murray Energy—the nation's largest privately owned coal mining company—announced it was laying off more than 160 workers in response to the reelection of President Barack Obama. The company cites the Obama administration's so-called war on coal as the reason the layoffs are necessary.

The layoffs include 102 miners at the company's operations in Utah, 54 in Illinois, and 7 in West Virginia. Murray currently employs about 3,000 workers, producing some 30 million tons of bituminous coal every year.

Murray CEO Robert E. Murray announced the layoffs on November 9 after delivering a prayer to company staff claiming "the takers outvoted the producers" in the election.

"The American people have made their choice," said Murray. "They have decided that America must change its course, away from the principles of our Founders. And, away from the idea of individual freedom and individual responsibility. Away from capitalism, economic responsibility, and personal acceptance."

He concluded by asking forgiveness for the layoffs. "Lord, please forgive me and anyone with me in Murray Energy Corp. for the decisions that we are now forced to make to preserve the very existence of any of the enterprises that you have helped us build."

Murray also predicted that the reelection of Obama set the stage for the "total destruction of the coal industry by 2030." In reality, however, most analysts agree that the challenges faced by the US coal industry are largely the result of a combination of economic forces.

The development and expansion of the technique of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has led to burgeoning natural gas reserves and cheap prices that are significantly undercutting coal's once dominant share of electricity production.

According to the latest figure from the Energy Information Agency (EIA), "In August 2012, coal produced 39% of U.S. electricity, up from a low of 32% in April 2012, when the natural gas share of generation equaled that of coal.... The August coal share of generation is still notably lower than the 50% annual average over the 1990-2010 period."

"It's the market forces that are pushing [coal] out of the market," claimed Alan Beamon of the EIA.

A report from the Brattle Group released last month revised upward its prediction for coal-fired power plant retirements in the next four years, concluding that the "change is primarily due to changing market conditions, not environmental rule revisions, which have trended towards more lenient requirements and schedules."

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The often-cited report from Bloomberg Government that claimed that “New coal plants would effectively be banned because their emission rate is almost double that of the proposed standard” also concluded that “The new policy probably wouldn’t shift current investment patterns in the power sector. Natural-gas plants already have a compelling price advantage.”

“Coal really hasn’t been the fuel of choice in the power sector for some time,” the report explained. “The average U.S. coal-fired power plant is 38 years old, and a majority of plants were built before 1980. Since 1990, coal has been the fuel of choice in just 6 percent of new power plants, while natural gas has powered 77 percent of the additions.”

“Whether the EPA’s proposed greenhouse gas emissions standard eventually becomes U.S. law is a moot point in many ways,” the report concludes. “Natural gas is already the fuel of choice in the power sector, and increased use of natural gas is already putting downward pressure on power-related [greenhouse gas] emissions.”

Moreover, a report last year by the non-partisan Congressional Research Services (CRS), which analyzed nine of the new regulations that are to take effect, found that “The primary impacts of many of the rules will largely be on coal-fired plants more than 40 years old that have not, until now, installed state-of-the-art pollution controls. Many of these plants are inefficient and are being replaced by more efficient combined cycle natural gas plants, a development likely to be encouraged if the price of competing fuel—natural gas—continues to be low, almost regardless of EPA rules.”

Many of the coal-fired power plants being retired ahead of deadlines for new EPA emissions standards are old and operationally inefficient. This plant in Rivesville, West Virginia, which closed earlier this year, was brought online in 1919.

Nowhere has the “war on coal” narrative been parroted stronger than in central Appalachia, mainly southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky, where the coal industry faces a deepening crisis. The US Department of Energy’s latest projections released in June predict production in the region will be cut in half by the end of the decade.

“Appalachian coal production declines substantially from current levels, as coal produced from the extensively mined, higher cost reserves of Central Appalachia is supplanted by lower cost coal from other supply regions,” the Energy Information Administration wrote.

The EIA projections for coal production in Central Appalachia (Charleston Gazette)

As Sean O’Leary from the West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy recently explained to Ken Ward of the Charleston Gazette, “The reality is that even without greenhouse gas or mercury regulations, coal production in Central Appalachia is going to dramatically decline. Repealing environmental regulations won’t make the remaining coal seams in West Virginia any thicker or easier to mine, and it won’t stop power plants from converting to natural gas.”

These production declines have translated into growing layoffs in West Virginia, where recent statistics from the US Department of Labor show that coal-mining employment declined by 900 in the third quarter. This comes on top of the loss of 1,200 coal jobs in the second quarter.

The US coal industry is also highly exposed to the deepening global economic crisis. Last year’s 107 million short tons of coal—worth \$16 billion—exported by the US onto the global market represented the largest export volume since 1991 and more than double the amount exported in 2006. Economic recession and financial turmoil in Europe, as well as slowdowns in the emerging economies like China, increasingly threaten important markets for the high-quality metallurgical coal reserves remaining in central Appalachia.

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices Burbank Leader

11/20/2012

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options — and risks — for the Obama administration.

"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

"But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks," Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as "Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok."

"We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. "How much a part is a big fight right now," Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film *Promised Land* is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some

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financing for the project came from a company in the United Arab Emirates — a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that "you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy."

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

"Yes, we are concerned," said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. "Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development." He added that federal intrusion "is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

"He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track," Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

"I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development," said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be "some attempts" to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

"A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement," said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. "That might make them a bit more open to regulatory oversight."

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a "big opportunity" for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that "if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks" that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. "I don't think the president can punt this one," he said.

Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger

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**EPA official hopeful on gas drilling study
WBOY-TV - Online**

11/20/2012

PITTSBURGH (AP) - A top official with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is optimistic that a project examining natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drinking water will provide comprehensive guidelines to help scientists and the public identify the key issues.

Glenn Paulson, the EPA's science advisor, says Friday that a progress report should be released before the end of the year, and a final report in 2014. He spoke at a University of Pittsburgh conference on health impacts of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

Paulson also says he feels the Obama administration is providing enough support to study the issue.

The EPA says natural gas "plays a key role in our nation's clean energy future" but that serious concerns have been raised about potential impacts to the environment and human health.

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FayObserver.com - Editorial: Congress can fix our senseless ethanol policy
Fayetteville Observer - Online

11/20/2012

Published: 08:38 PM, Mon Nov 19, 2012

Editorial: Congress can fix our senseless ethanol policy

Related

If a bipartisan coalition in Congress and a rare alliance of petroleum producers, food producers and environmentalists couldn't do it, we're not sure what will.

But that still doesn't make federal insistence on adding ethanol to our gasoline sensible. The Environmental Protection Agency's stubborn grip on proven folly is especially aggravating in a year when drought destroyed as much as half of the nation's corn crop and sent prices soaring.

This is pushing up the cost of gasoline and food, even as consumers continue to suffer from slow economic recovery.

Earlier this year, nearly a dozen states, multiple industries (farm, beef and pork groups among them), members of Congress and environmental groups asked the EPA to at least temporarily waive the federal mandate to blend ethanol with gasoline.

The EPA responded last week that it ran the numbers and didn't see that cutting back ethanol use would help reduce prices.

The federal ethanol requirement has caused problems and added expenses to food production since it was imposed in 2005. While farmers increased corn production for the new market, the need for billions of gallons of ethanol a year (13.2 billion this year) has driven up prices for food producers who use corn directly in making food, or indirectly, as a cattle and pork feed. Since corn products are so prevalent, the result was a price increase in a broad array of foods in grocery stores.

The overarching goal here was to move America toward energy self-sufficiency. There is no evidence that ethanol has had much effect in doing that. Rather, self-sufficiency is arriving through no fault of ethanol's. It's coming from the new petroleum extraction technology - horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing - that have so increased America's oil and gas production that we're on the verge of becoming an exporter.

Further, new research is leading to distilling techniques that will produce alcohol from non-food products. A \$170 million biofuel refinery proposed for Sampson County has gotten its construction go-aheads and may be producing 20 million gallons of ethanol a year from switchgrass and similar grasses, starting in 2014.

How to fix this? Friends of the Earth biofuels expert Michal Rosenoer suggests a path: "If the worst U.S. drought in more than 50 years and skyrocketing food prices are not enough to make the EPA act, it falls to Congress to provide relief from our senseless federal support for corn ethanol."

OK, Congress. This should be easy. Do it.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Nov. 21

Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices Coastline Pilot - Online

11/20/2012

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